**Request For Information (RFI)**
**for**
**Billing and Accounting Service for the EOS Data and Information System (EOSDIS)**

This is a Request for Information (RFI) issued by the Earth Science Data and Information System (ESDIS) Project of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)'s Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) to seek industry comments and inputs concerning a Billing and Accounting Service for the EOS Data and Information System.

The EOSDIS Distributed Active Archive Centers (DAACs) acquire, processes and deliver very large volumes (estimated to reach at least 250 terabytes/year on media by 2002) of remote sensing and related data to research scientists and public and governmental entities that apply this physical information to understand and solve major problems in the Earth Sciences, such as global change, environmental monitoring, agricultural inventory, etc. Consistent with NASA's Earth Science Enterprise Data Policy and Federal regulations (OMB Circulars A-130 and A-25), the ESDIS Project is considering a program of recovering certain costs (including distribution media and shipping charges) from users who obtain data and information services from the EOSDIS DAACs.

The ESDIS Project is interested in awarding a contract for an end-to-end Billing and Accounting Service that would work cooperatively with the ESDIS Science Operations Office (SOO) and the DAACs. The functions of the Billing and Accounting Service for the ESDIS Project and the DAACs would include, but are not limited to:

- Receive DAAC product price list from ESDIS Project (and at least annual updates),
- Allow DAAC users to establish accounts (including prepaid accounts or purchase order accounts),
- Allow for NASA funded accounts, either through pre-payment or by pre-authorization and billing,
- Receive notice of data set order from DAACs,
- Invoice and collect payment (by check or electronic funds transfer) for order from customer (track by order number),
- Provide notice to DAAC that data can be shipped,
- Receive orders for distribution media and shipping materials from DAACs,
- Supply media and shipping materials to DAACs, provide postage / shipping authorization to DAACs (e.g. Postal meter with contractor account and pre-paid UPS/FedEx shipping.),
- Receive notice from DAAC regarding refund or replacement of data set,
- Send refund to customer or credit customer account,
- Supply media, postage, materials, and postal charges to DAACs for replacement data sets,
- Respond to user queries concerning account or order payment status,
- Provide regular activity reports to the ESDIS Project.

In all aspects of the service, the Contractor would operate in conformance with Government regulations for financial management and protection of the privacy of user information, and would employ best commercial practices for interactive services and security.

The Billing and Accounting Service Contractor would receive funding from NASA for fee and profit, and would receive revenues from DAAC users as reimbursement for user chargeable costs including:

- Cost for DAAC distribution media (actual cost including any discounts),
- Cost for shipping materials,
- Cost of shipping media and materials to DAACs,
- Cost for shipping media to customer (actual cost including volume discounts),

The arrangement for fee and profit may include recovery of the following costs:

- Cost (with overhead) for operating the Billing and Accounting Service,
- Cost of implementing billing and accounting system, including necessary interfaces to DAAC-based systems (one or more systems at each DAAC site),
- Cost of supporting Government audits.

For an understanding of the scope of operation of the Billing and Accounting Service respondents should review the provided references. These documents serve as a backdrop against which respondents must frame and pose the appropriate advanced information technology topics for further consideration:

| Reference | URL |
|---|---|
| 1. Billing and Account Operations Concept (includes Billing and Accounting Policy documents) (Draft, April 20, 1999) | http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/RFIDoc1_OpsCon.rtf.doc<br>http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/rfidoc1_opscon.pdf |
| 2. Billing and Account System Requirements (Draft, April 20, 1999) | http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/RFIDoc2_SysReqs.rtf.doc<br>http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/rfidoc2_sysreqs.pdf |
| 3. Central Billing and Accounting Site Operational Requirements (Draft, April 20, 1999) | http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/RFIDoc3_OpsReqs.rtf.doc<br>http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/new-esdis/rfidoc3_opsreq.pdf |
| 4. EOSDIS DAAC Current and Projected User Statistics Essay (April 19, 1999) | http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/RFIDoc4_UserStats.rtf.doc<br>http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/rfidoc4_userstats.pdf |
| 5. Statistics on the DAAC Usage (J. Dunham et al., April, 1999) | http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/RFIDoc5_DAACUsage.doc<br>http://spsosun.gsfc.nasa.gov/rfidoc5_daacusage.pdf |

**Table 1**

In addition, information concerning the EOSDIS DAACs is available on-line at: http://ulabibm.gsfc.nasa.gov/daac/

The on-line product search and order capability provided by NASA's National Space Science Data Center is an example of a successful implementation of an end user interface for ordering and paying for NASA data products that exemplifies how such functions may be provided in a manner compliant with NASA policy and commercial practice.  It is available on-line at: http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/

The ESDIS Project encourages responses from businesses or other groups interested in the opportunity of providing the Billing and Accounting Service.  The responses should demonstrate the operational reliability and robustness of the proposed approach, as well as simplicity and straightforwardness for users and the DAACs.  The responses should show how the Service could adapt to growth in the user community, the number of data centers it supports, changes in systems it interfaces with, and new technology for electronic commerce.

Sources with information relevant to this request are asked to respond by submitting a white paper of *no more than five (5) pages* which conforms to **Annex 1**, "Template For Billing and Accounting Service Submittal". The paper should clearly address a prospective Billing and Accounting Service contractor's approach to providing the needed services.

All information received from this RFI will be combined and used for government procurement planning purposes. Sources are urged to describe their approach in enough detail so that NASA can plan for subsequent proposal opportunities for which proprietary information is appropriate.

The information received in response to this RFI will be reviewed and summarized by a panel of experts. Some or no part of the summarized and synthesized recommendations may or may not form the basis of a future NASA solicitation, such as a NASA  RFP (Request for Proposals).

**Annex 1**

**TEMPLATE FOR BILLING AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE SUBMITTAL**

1. **Background and Description of Proposed Approach**

   Describe in adequate detail the specific approach to implementing a Billing and Accounting Service being proposed for ESDIS Project consideration, the current state of its development, how interfaces to DAAC-based systems would be implemented, the comparability of your approach with or its use of current and/or anticipated commercial approaches. Optionally, you may wish to provide a brief Operations Concept ("a day in the life" scenario) illustrating the use of your approach.

2. **Operational Robustness and Flexibility for Growth and Evolution of Proposed Approach**

   Address the operational reliability and robustness of your proposed approach, as well as simplicity and straightforwardness for users and the DAACs. Describe how your approach to providing the Service could adapt to growth in the user community, the number of data centers the Service supports, changes in the systems it interfaces with, and new technology for electronic commerce.

3. **Fee/Profit Arrangement**

   Describe an arrangement for fee and profit that you believe would allow the Billing and Accounting Service to be a viable business opportunity. Include a description of the cost factors that would be covered by fee, possible bases for incentive award of fee, the time period over which the Service would have to operate to be viable, and the phasing of fee covered costs over the period..

4. **Timeline, Cost to Develop, and Make Operational**

   Provide a rough estimate of the time and cost to develop capabilities needed for the Billing and Accounting Service and bring the Service to operational status.

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**SCHEDULE:**

Deadline for Submission:                                    COB June 1, 1999

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Responses may be sent via electronic mail, regular mail, or fax to:

Ms. Tonjua Hines
ESDIS Project, Code 423
Goddard Space Flight Center
Tel. (301) 614-5333
Fax (301) 614-5267
E-mail: Tonjua.Hines@gsfc.nasa.gov

*If you respond via regular mail or fax, please provide an electronic copy in Microsoft Word format in addition to the printed version of your submission.*